



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

November 1-November 15, 2010

### AGRICULTURE

**Bamyan's First National Park, Band-e-Amir, Featured in NBC Special:** Richard Engel, NBC News' chief foreign correspondent, shot a segment for the Today Show on Bamyan Province and the Band-e-Amir National Park. The goals of the shoot were producing a high-profile positive story on Afghanistan and encouraging tourism in Bamyan. The shoot covered conservation efforts, including community outreach, and focused on Band-e-Amir National Park as an up-and-coming tourist hub and natural national treasure.



NBC correspondent Richard Engel speaking with a local community leader in Band-e-Amir.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan, Abigail Sugrue

Band-e-Amir was officially declared Afghanistan's first national park in April 2009. USAID is funding the ongoing project to build the park and generate tourism in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The NBC crew met with Governor Sarabi of Bamyan and explored the site where the two towering, ancient Buddha statues once stood before the Taliban destroyed them in 2001. They also captured the breathtaking natural terrain and local color of Band-e-Amir, including a buzkashi match – the national sport of Afghanistan. Engel interviewed a local Afghan community leader and a park ranger, and met with a family using a new fuel-efficient stove that is part of a pilot program.



With assistance from USAID, 14 representatives traveled to Malawi to observe and study emergency pediatric care where ETAT is further advanced.

PHOTO: USAID/Tech-Serve

### HEALTH

#### **Exchanging Ideas for Improved Child Health:**

Prioritizing the very sick is imperative given the long queues of patients waiting to receive medical attention in hospitals around Afghanistan. Emergency triage assessment and treatment (ETAT) is an essential function of any hospital's emergency care, particularly when diagnosing and treating children. Since hospitals in Afghanistan lack the capacity and resources to properly prioritize patients' treatment based on the severity of their condition, many children die within the first few hours of their arrival.

Introducing this life-saving practice in Afghan hospitals is a joint activity implemented through USAID's Technical Assistance to the Central and Provincial Ministry of Public Health, and Basic

Support to Institutionalizing Child Survival projects.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

In the first week of November, 14 representatives from the Indira Ghandi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), the Ministry of Public Health in Kabul, and provincial hospitals in Hirat, Jalalabad, Bamyán, and Mazari Sharif traveled to Malawi to observe and study emergency pediatric care where this practice is further advanced. Before the study tour, Afghan participants completed ETAT training taught by trainers from Malawi. The Afghan delegation visited regional and district hospitals and observed the daily operations of the emergency, admission, inpatient, and intensive care departments in order to gain practical insights on successful triage, patient referral, and inpatient monitoring systems.

Back in Afghanistan, the Afghan study tour participants developed action plans to teach others about their new insights and initiate improvements in emergency pediatric care in provincial hospitals. The IGICH will serve as a learning center, ensuring the facilitation of future study visits within Afghanistan.

### STABILIZATION

#### **Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA)-sponsored Apprentices Receive Permanent Employment Contracts in Guzara:**

Residents of Guzara District in Hirat Province recently celebrated the successful completion of an apprenticeship program at Guzara Industrial Park. The program trained apprentices in response to community requests for vocational training and supported local business in need of additional skilled employees but unable to afford the training.

A joint collaboration between USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) and Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) projects, the apprenticeship program enabled previously unemployed, unskilled citizens to gain job skills and permanent job offers. LGCD paid the salaries for three months of capacity training apprenticeships in five factories for 160 laborers from Guzara, with 30 slots reserved for women and 30 for disabled persons. ASMED provided basic training on workplace behavior. At the end of the program, 159 interested participants received long-term employment contracts.

High-ranking GIROA officials, including the Guzara District Governor, directors of the involved companies, and U.S. Government representatives attended the ceremony. To demonstrate GIROA's interest in continuing to support its citizens, LGCD and ASMED will follow-up with the 159 apprentices in a few months to monitor their progress.



An apprentice receives his employment contract during the closing ceremony.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

Bibi Jan, an elderly woman, was one of the recipients of a permanent job. Expressing her appreciation to USAID and the Afghan Government, she stated, "I am a widow without any source of income. I had to work as a maid in a stranger's house... Getting a long-term contract with a fixed salary, my concerns to provide an honorable life for my children are over and I can better concentrate on their education."

**Re-opening of Women's Shahram Garden in Kabul:** The Shahram Garden for women in Kabul reopened on November 3 after decades of violent conflict had left it in ruins. Today, the rehabilitated eight-acre garden is an oasis of rose bushes, winding walkways, and fountains. The enclosure also includes a gym and sports classes, vocation training, literacy classes, and an area for the women of Kabul to buy and sell goods.



Attendees of the Women's Garden Rehabilitation opening event.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

The reopening ceremony included remarks from U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry and Senior Afghan officials, including the Minister of Women's Affairs, Mayor of Kabul, Governor of Kabul Province, and members of parliament. The Shahram Garden was rehabilitated through USAID's Community Development Program and Local Governance and Community Development projects.

The Shahram Garden is not only a safe haven for the women and girls of Kabul to socialize and learn but a critical step forward for women's rights in Afghanistan. Fifty percent of the laborers who rebuilt the park were women. In his address, Ambassador Eikenberry noted, "Every day, the women of Afghanistan are proving that they can be on the frontline of Afghanistan's rehabilitation efforts."



The technical advisor talks with students at the Esa Baba School.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

**Improving Education in Paktika:** Throughout the past month, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project has supported the Afghan Government with a technical advisor (TA) who provides support and input to initiatives conducted jointly by the Department of Education (DoE), the Provincial Reconstruction Team, and other stakeholders in Sharana District, Paktika Province. The TA surveyed nine schools to collect statistical data, monitor education-related projects implemented by U.S. and international donors, and facilitate meetings with students, teachers, and





## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

parents to ascertain educational needs in Sharana.

Limited access to education remains a significant community grievance in Paktika. The average literacy rate for males in Paktika is four percent, while female literacy is negligible. The technical advisor offers expertise to the Afghan Government and informs educational policy and strategy in this remote province. The director of the DoE has praised the TA's work, citing meetings where field data was presented to improve education service delivery in the province.

### **Schools Supplies Distribution Documented by Television Crew in Zhari District:**

Reporters from Radio Television of Afghanistan (RTA) documented the delivery of a large procurement of school supplies in the Zhari District of Kandahar Province this week. In close collaboration with the Kandahar Department of Education (DoE), community elders, and the District Governor, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project distributed school bags, pens, pencils, blackboards, chalk, carpets, and notebooks in seven schools in Zhari internally displaced person camps. Overall, the supplies benefitted 1,810 male and female students in need of assistance. The provision of these items will encourage student attendance and improve the working environment for teachers and administrators. With this procurement, the Afghan Government has responded to the needs of communities in an impoverished area of Kandahar and enhanced the perception of the DoE as a provider of equitable access to learning regardless of a community's location. The director of the DoE commented on the importance of education development at this time and advised the students and teachers to take maximum advantage of the assistance they received.



Director of Education (right) and the District Governor (left) are interviewed by the media about the school supply distribution in Zhari.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan



Community members in Rege Kalacha hold a shura with Afghan Government representatives and members of the KPRT.

PHOTO: KPRT

### **Kandahar Shura Brings Together Community Members and Government:**

On November 5, the community of Rege Kalacha held a shura with representatives of the Afghan Government and members of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team's (KPRT's) Sub-district Stabilization Team. This shura was an important stepping stone in the stabilization of Kandahar City's Sub-district 2. Until the recent clearing operation in Malajat, the village was under Taliban control and local government officials were afraid to enter the area. Given the new



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

increase in security, the community elders of Rege Kalacha have been working with the Sub-district Stabilization Team to re-establish a relationship with the municipal government to bring resources and development projects to their village.

During the shura, the elders introduced their *wakeel* (representative), who was chosen by the community, including the religious leaders of all four mosques in the village. The *wakeel* will represent the community to the Kandahar City Municipality and will bring the concerns and needs of Rege Kalacha to the attention of the Sub-district Manager. Through this partnership, the *wakeel* will work with the municipal government to find grassroots solutions to development challenges in the village. KPRT's Sub-district Stabilization Team will support the municipality to facilitate these community-driven requests.

### EDUCATION

#### **Students Participate in Three-country Videoconference Highlighting Afghan History:**

Students from Afghan history classes at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) had a unique opportunity to discuss their country's history with American and British students in a special videoconference on November 10.

The videoconference, sponsored by the British Council, focused on *The Great Game: Afghanistan*, an epic cycle of plays on Afghan history produced by London's Tricycle Theatre. The plays were performed in London and in selected U.S. cities in October.

AUAF's participation was made possible by the USAID-funded, state-of-the-art videoconference facility that AUAF uses in its distance-learning courses.



Afghan students participate in the November 10 videoconference.

PHOTO: AUAF Office of Communications

The term "the great game," coined by British author Rudyard Kipling, refers to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century rivalries between the British and Russian empires for controlling influence in Central Asia. During the videoconference, students and faculty moderators from AUAF and California State University-East Bay and the Royal Holloway University in London discussed the plays as well as the "great game" theory of colonialism in Afghanistan.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to engage with a distinguished panel of international scholars on a theme that is central to the history of Afghanistan," said Dr. Bahar Jalali, an AUAF history professor.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

### **Master's in Public Policy and Administration Student Extends Opportunities for Higher- Education Development to the Private Sector:**

While the USAID-funded Master's in Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) program was designed to build the capacity of Afghan civil servants, some MPPA students are finding that their skills are also useful for development work in the private sector.

In 2009, Ziarmal, a mid-level manager at the Afghan Civil Service Institute and a student of the MPPA program, left the public sector to start his own consulting firm. As an independent consultant, Ziarmal provides policy analysis, strategic planning, human resources management, and monitoring and evaluation services to government ministries and international development organizations, including USAID projects in 19 provinces. In addition to consulting, Ziarmal also founded the Ajeer Business Management Institute, which recently signed a memorandum of understanding with George Mason University and the U.S. Department of State to develop a four-year bachelor's degree program in business management.

Ziarmal said, "My MPPA program has been very useful for my career development, and I hope other Afghans will benefit from the same opportunity through the new program." Approximately 1,000 students are enrolled at Ajeer Centers in Kabul, Badakhshan, and Kunduz provinces. By engaging with the private sector, Ziarmal is using his MPPA education to improve the quality of education and increase access to higher-education resources in Afghanistan.



Zabiullah Ziarmal will graduate from Kabul University with a Master's in Public Policy and Administration in December.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA



A woman in her clothing shop in Jalalabad.

PHOTO: USAID/STAY Positive

**Female Labor Market Study Finds Doors are Opening for Young Women:** Traditionally, Afghan men are the head of households. Young women, who typically have lower educational levels, fewer marketable skills, and limited employment opportunities, are economically dependent on the men in their family. However, traditional roles are shifting due to war, conflict, and the increased cost of living. In Nangarhar Province, women are increasingly contributing to family income. This shift in norms provides an emerging opportunity to invest in promoting female participation in the labor market.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

A recent USAID-funded study examined the female labor market in Nangarhar Province to identify ways to provide vital skills training and employment opportunities to female youth with low levels of literacy. The study identified market-driven opportunities in the formal and informal labor markets, including home-based production and income-generating activities. Findings showed that women are working not only in traditional fields of tailoring and embroidery, but also in areas widely reserved for men, such as construction. As a result, young women wish to gain literacy, numeracy, and business skills. Additionally, successful programs utilize apprenticeships and mentoring for practical skills application complemented with training in marketing.

One 24-year-old woman from Jalalabad said, “My husband’s income is not sufficient and I want to help him by earning an income. I think I can learn and do anything if I am taught well and have someone guide me in the beginning.”